

## **The Russo-Chechen Conflict: Multilevel and Multimodal Transformation**

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### **Abstract:**

The Russo-Chechen conflict started in the early 1800s and continues today. It is one of the most intractable and long-lasting ethno-political conflicts in the world and is replete with violence and atrocities that have escalated and deescalated from time to time. In this paper several peace and conflict studies (PACS) theories are used to assess the conflict and link formal and informal peacemaking strategies to the Russo-Chechen conflict. It is argued that informal multilevel and multimodal diplomacy on different levels is necessary for transformation of this conflict.

**Keywords:** Conflict transformation | peace | Chechnya | Russia

### **Article:**

**\*\*\*Note: Full text of article below**

## **The Russo-Chechen Conflict: Multilevel and Multimodal Transformation**

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The Russo-Chechen conflict started in the early 1800s and continues today. It is one of the most intractable and long-lasting ethnopolitical conflicts in the world and is replete with violence and atrocities that have escalated and deescalated from time to time. In this paper several peace and conflict studies (PACS) theories are used to assess the conflict and link formal and informal peacemaking strategies to the Russo-Chechen conflict. It is argued that informal multilevel and multimodal diplomacy on different levels is necessary for transformation of this conflict.

### **Introduction**

The eighteenth century Russian imperial policies of expansion towards the Caucasus necessitated conquering the mountain people of the Northern Caucasus including the Chechens. It appeared that Russia needed more than a century to take fragile control of the region. Initially, Russia faced strong resistance and later a number of rebellions of the mountain people, most of which it failed to subdue. It is hard to say that the Russian Empire conquered Chechnya entirely before Soviet rule, despite the popular belief that the people of the Northern Caucasus were defeated by Russian troops in the mid nineteenth century. The Chechen oblast was created in January 1922, and in 1936, the Chechen and Ingush regions were reunited in an autonomous oblast (Seely, 2001). On February 23, 1944 the Chechen and Ingush nations *en masse* were deported into exile on the basis of a decree of the State Committee for Defense of the Soviet Union. The pretext was Chechens' alleged collaboration with the Germans occupying the neighboring regions (Lapidus, 1998). As part of the process the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) established in 1936 was abolished. After the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, the Chechen

and Ingush people were allowed to return to their homes in 1957. Upon the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Chechens declared their independence from the Russian Federation, thus renewing the Russian- Chechen conflict.

Johar Dudayev, the national leader of Chechens, declared his nation's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. President Yeltsin of Russia hesitated to take decisive measures against it. Instead, he pursued a neglect policy in the region until 1994 when the first Chechen war started. This three-year period gave the Chechen fighters an opportunity to stockpile weaponry, most of which was purchased from the Russian military itself (Ganguly & Taras, 1998).

The first Chechen war was between the well-organized Russian military institution and the Chechen guerrillas. This fact brought about a situation in which making distinctions between combatants and non-combatants has proved to be very difficult, thus contributing to massive human rights abuses (Cornell, 1999). The 1994-1996 war ended with the military victory of Chechnya over the Russian Federation bringing about the Khasavyurt Peace Accord, which legally ended the war. However, the peace appeared to be very ephemeral and fragile, since war restarted again in 1999.

## Designing a Conflict Transformation System: Prospects for Peace

### *Conflict Resolution Levels and a Peacemaking Model*

To create a sustainable peace, the conflict transformation process should commence on three different levels- top, middle, and grassroots- at the same time (Lederach, 1998). Those levels can be identified in terms of the participating leaders who are grassroots, middle range, and top leaders. Lederach (1998) argues that work on all these three levels is necessary to move toward the construction of a broad-based approach to peace building.

The grassroots leaders include local leaders, leaders of indigenous NGOs, community developers, local health officials, and refugee camp officials among others. Peace efforts made at the local level would assist the parties to learn how to respect each other's cultural differences (Byrne, 1995), reduce prejudice of the other as well as empower people to deal with war traumas (Lederach, 1998). Even though grassroots leaders may not have direct access to the negotiation process, they enjoy an enormous power the source of which is the local people (Pearson, 2001).

The middle-range leaders are ethnic and religious leaders, intellectuals, and humanitarian leaders. The place of the middle-range leaders in that web is also essential since they are recognized and respected people in the communities. They may deal with many important problem-solving activities such as creating peace commissions, training people in peace education, and organizing problem-solving workshops.

The top leadership involves military, economic, cultural, political, and religious leaders with high visibility that focuses on

high-level negotiations. The top leadership engages in negotiations to bring a change to the problem. Since the activities on all three levels take place at the same time, a web of interdependent activities and people is created that is systemic in orientation, holding people and processes together (Lederach, 1998).

The model (Figure 1) below depicts conflict resolution circular. Arguably, while dealing with the protracted conflicts, the conflict resolution process may take place by using a combination of all or some of the informal conflict resolution strategies shown in the radial on different levels to increase productivity. The model presents eight different strategies- peace education, interfaith dialogue, interactive problem solving, forgiveness and reconciliation, negotiating for mutual gain, empowerment, storytelling, and nonviolence- which may have an impact on one another thus increasing the contribution to the process more positively.

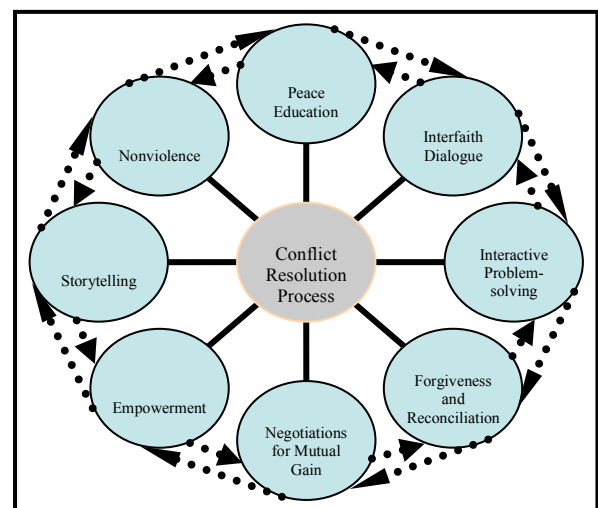


Figure 1. Conflict Resolution Radial

All of these methods of conflict resolution work for informal environments, while negotiating for mutual gain is for both formal and informal settings. I will discuss

them individually on a theoretical basis, and apply to a case to see its applicability.

### *Peacemaking through Peace Education*

Peace education aims at creating a commitment to peace in the human consciousness (Harris & Morrison, 2003) and is a key element of conflict transformation at any level, including ethnic conflicts (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007). Sustained education is considered necessary for building peace but is not sufficient by itself since it depends on the political, economic, and social structure of change. The concepts of peace and peace education have to come down to the local level to embrace all people (Galtung, 1983).

Nowadays, growing number of states turn from violence to political diplomacy in order to remove the hostility that has divided them (Johnson, 2007). Yet, political diplomacy alone is not able to recover from the ruins of conflict in divided societies, where groups hold on to their perception of the other as the enemy by revering their own *chosen traumas* and *chosen glories* (Volkan, 1997). This type of perception is ongoing because an older person unconsciously externalizes his or her traumatized self to a developing child's personality (Volkan, 1997). When people continue to harbor feelings of injustice towards "the other" it is very difficult to negotiate a peaceful coexistence (Zuzovski, 1997). Therefore, education as a primary medium for the transmission of knowledge, culture, and values acquires extra importance. The transmission of the historical memory of violent behavior shapes young minds making adult education that reframes the telling of the history integral part of the conflict transformation processes in protracted conflict cases (Ury, 1999; Volkan, 2001). Johnson (2007) among others argues that systemic approaches to

peace education must include engagement at multiple levels of government, education ministry, political party systems, labor unions, commercial enterprise, school and university, and family and community.

### *Implications for Chechnya*

Promoting peace education programs in both Russia and Chechnya would bring about positive contribution to peace in the region. To enhance the effect of these programs they should be permanent and not limited to children alone. Since Russia is a multinational country, the importance of adult learning is vital for peaceful and respectful co-existence. Therefore, adult education programs should not be limited to Chechnya rather they should be nationwide. The positive effect of transformative education for both children and adults would contribute to prejudice reduction, victim empowerment, equality awareness, mediation skills, and listening skills. If used decisively, peace education can contribute to the peace between Russians and Chechens, and help form an effective tool to oppose the rise in destructive nationalism.

### **Peacemaking through Interfaith Dialogue**

If religion has the power of motivating people to struggle for their rights, then the power of religion should be explored to forge constructive politics (Amaladoss, 2001). Efforts must be made to re-humanize people through religious teachings (Francoeur, 2006). Different religions together can reach a strong human solidarity to oppose violence and human suffering (Arinze, 2002).

The Orthodox Church and the Mosque in Russia have not effectively cooperated in any significant peace projects related to the Chechen tragedy. Interfaith dialogue through religious institutions could bring

both the Muslims and Christians of Russia together on different social levels—grassroots activists, middle-range leaders, and elites—for dialogue that can take an array of forms possessing a number of different goals. These conversations can address issues that matter to the participants. Interfaith dialogue is not a debate or a rivalry; rather, its aim is a conversation addressing mutual problem solving. The fact that Russia is a home to about twenty three millions indigenous Muslims implies that Christianity and Islam have peacefully co-existed for a long time, through peaceful traditions that can be harnessed for interfaith dialogue to reconcile, heal, and prevent violent conflicts. The interfaith dialogue meetings could contribute to building trust to decrease the anxiety and fear in the region. The Russian Orthodox Church could lead these dialogue meetings, which would increase trust among the Muslim communities especially the Chechens. Muslim and Christian communities may then develop a common peace program to facilitate commitments across lines of religious division.

Many renowned scholars and peace activists agree that Islam is a religion of peace forbidding terrorism and violence (Hanley, 2007; Presbyterian-Record, 2004). The reintroduction of Islam into Russian society would have at least a twofold effect. First, the Muslims of Russia, especially the Chechens, would be freed from the burden of being perceived as potential terrorists. Second, the false fear of Muslims among Russia's Christians, as reinforced by state policies and some media would be challenged. Interfaith dialogue would also counter media misinterpretation of Islam (Saeed, 2007).

#### *Implications for Chechnya*

The Russo-Chechen conflict is not based on cultural differences, neither is it a clash of religions despite the fact that culture and religion have a serious motivational effect in this conflict, especially for the Chechens. Russia has had Muslim communities that have co-existed in Russia with Christians for centuries (Shlapentokh, 2007) developing certain streams of positive relationships. Hence, in Russia, there is a fertile ground to begin an interreligious dialogue between Christian Russians and Muslim Chechens, which could be expanded to include other religious groups such as the Muslim Tatars and Russia's Jews. Models exist for addressing existing intergroup problems in Russia and Chechnya. Interreligious dialogue among Russia's Muslims and Christians could bring about significant positive change and help strengthen solidarity in the peace process in Chechnya, and elsewhere in Russia.

Interfaith dialogue holds the potential to nurture the joint activities of religious communities in Russia contributing to social change affecting the Russo-Chechen peace process. Dialogue can explore the commonalities of both communities while addressing structural challenges. The religious community members who learn about each other's problems and shortcomings may develop mutual understanding (Francoeur, 2006). Undoubtedly, direct communication is a powerful tool for developing mutual respect and tolerance as well as empathy (Abu-Nimer, 2004). In this sense, interfaith dialogue may play an informative and encouraging role in the Russo-Chechen conflict.

#### **Peacemaking through Interactive Conflict Resolution**

Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR) is a technique designed to respond to a conflict,

the primary aim of which is to change the views of the middle tier elites involved in some conflict interaction. The utility of unofficial methods, including ICR, directed more toward the subjective and relational aspects of ethnic conflict is increasingly acknowledged (Fisher, 2007). Fisher (2005, 2008) and Mitchell (2003, 2008) stress the necessary interplay between official and unofficial interventions in order to effectively address intractable ethno-political conflicts.

Herbert Kelman (1997, 2000) identified five assumptions identified about the nature of conflict and conflict resolution that are derived from a social-psychological analysis that may assist third parties to formulate the structure, content, and the process of interactive problem solving workshops (IPW) for the parties to a protracted conflict. First, for many aspects of international or interethnic conflicts the individual may represent the most appropriate unit of analysis because key conflict resolution processes such as empathy, learning, creative problem solving, among others take place on the individual level. Second, international conflict must also be viewed as an intersocietal or interethnic phenomenon, which suggests a broader view of diplomacy as a complex mix of official and unofficial processes, thus displaying the important role of IPWs for any interethnic conflict. Third, conflicts are dynamic, interactive and self-perpetuating processes; therefore, conflict resolution efforts require an interaction capable of reversing the escalatory and self-perpetuating nature of conflict, which is not possible by official diplomacy alone. Moreover, constructive conflict resolution requires a change in influence strategies based on threats and refinement of strategies fed by promises and positive incentives. Human-based approaches addressing the needs and rights of people are necessary to bring about a positive change. Finally, the

expanded conception of influence processes is based on the assumption that ethnic conflict has a dynamic nature, hence, efforts are mobilized to discover possibilities for change, to identify conditions for change, and to overcome resistance to change (Kelman, 1997, 2000).

### *Implications for Chechnya*

Since it is an unofficial and academically based third-party approach, this intervention model would bring dynamic discussions to all aspects of the conflict among Chechens and Russians. The main purpose for designing workshops to enable the parties to explore each other's perspective and to generate a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict would not disturb either the Kremlin or the Chechen nationalists. Transferring the ideas acquired in the problem solving workshops to the political debate in the conflicting communities must be the ultimate goal of these workshops.

Interactive conflict resolution (ICR) may be a medium through which Chechens and Russians can understand the needs, fears, and aspirations of each other that might be useful in the peace process. Its unofficial nature would especially encourage the parties and sub-parties to come together to discuss their differences, since the Russians reject official meetings. Especially on the eve of the first Chechen war despite the urgent necessity for negotiations to avoid violent confrontations the Russian officials refused to meet with the Chechen leadership. Any form of ICR would be largely remedial in that and similar situations.

The history of problem solving processes displays considerable success. The informal format of problem solving creates promising conditions for nurturing positive change in the process of Russo-Chechen talks that should replace violent forms of

interaction. Bringing the advocates of the Chechen and Russian positions together would also be of a great importance for future positive change through increasing awareness of the problems of the other side. Moreover, the shifts of the parties' priorities that may take place over time can best be learned in informal interactive problem solving workshops.

### **Peacemaking through Storytelling**

Storytelling is another informal means of conflict resolution that stresses the importance of personal stories and their sharing among conflicting parties for conflict resolution (Bar-On, 2002). Storytelling may be both destructive and constructive (Senehi, 2000). Narratives generate or reproduce prejudicial and antagonistic images of other groups, mask inequalities and justice, inflame negative emotions, and misrepresent society (Senehi, 1996). However, narratives may also enhance peace when they involve a dialogue characterized by shared power, increased mutual recognition, the promotion of consciousness raising, and serve to resist domination, as well as teach conflict resolution strategies (Senehi, 2009a, 2009b).

Senehi (2000, 2009a) discusses how storytelling can be used as a means to transform conflicts constructively. She argues that story and social structure are interrelated. The production of meaning is an important process in social life, and storytelling addresses it. Stories are the source of local knowledge that is necessary to be included in the application of conflict resolution projects so as not to reproduce colonial, oppressive, or coercive policies in the interventions (Senehi & Byrne, 2006). Moreover, storytelling is a type of process that contributes to people empowerment. Storytelling as a source of knowledge and information may also make people aware of

the situation and inform them about opportunities to avoid imminent dangers for the peace, encouraging them to block new oppressive policies (Senehi, 1996, 2000).

### *Implications for Chechnya*

One of the primary venues of transforming conflict between the Chechens and Russians might be through the storytelling process with the grassroots that may take place through workshops, theater performances, and especially story collections and storytelling festivals, which assist in building relationships between people. The effects of storytelling on peacemaking are essential. It also might be seen as complementary to interfaith dialogue and interactive problem solving workshops. It really has to do with getting people to meet in a non-threatening space to discuss their concerns and problems. Sharing stories about their experiences and culture is a method of peacemaking, at least because it may remove one's prejudice about the other.

Storytelling seems to be one of the most promising innovative peacebuilding practices to assist in addressing the Russo-Chechen conflict. Its philosophy stems from the ability of people to share their personal experience through telling their own stories to find common ground, which helps them to hear and understand, and overcome mutual fear and prejudice. Personal stories may help to initiate reconciliation between the Chechen and Russian people through bringing them together to listen to each other, and possibly to develop respect, sympathy, and empathy toward the other, which could contribute to the entire process of social change. Storytelling festivals may inspire people in their struggle and search for truth and justice. Healing and reconciliation, through storytelling, engage the conflict transformation process.

### **Peacemaking through Reconciliation and Forgiveness**

Morton Deutsch defines forgiveness as “giving up rage, the desire for vengeance, and the grudge toward those who have inflicted grievous harm on you, your loved ones, or groups with whom you identify” (Hawk, 2007, p. 298). It also implies willingness “to accept the other into one’s moral community so that he or she is entitled to care and justice” (Hawk, 2007, p. 298). Forgiveness has emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions that overlap. Cognitive restructuring and reimagining the offender are crucial for initiating the forgiveness process, which is both spiritual and psychological (Cioni, 2007).

Forgiveness does not dismiss an event and it is not indifferent about justice but it means that carrying out justice as revenge is not an appropriate behavior (Hawk, 2007). Also, it is not about an obligation, rather it is about a choice, and human nature is the major reason for forgiveness (Garrard, 2002). In practical terms, it may be necessary for the offender to offer some form of acknowledgment, apology, and/or restitution, or even just ask for forgiveness.

Most world religions include teachings about the nature of forgiveness (Athar, 2010; Lauritzen, 1987). Some religious doctrines or philosophies place greater emphasis on the need for humans to find some sort of divine forgiveness for their own shortcomings, others place greater emphasis on the need for humans to practice forgiveness of one another, yet others make little or no distinction between human and/or divine forgiveness. In fact, studies show that forgiveness is positively correlated with religious problemsolving styles and religious duty (Lauritzen, 1987; Webb, Chickering, Colburn, Heisler, & Call, 2005).

Reconciliation has a number of varying meanings, which sometimes lead to different

understandings of it (Meierhenrich, 2008). In general, it is the process of repairing a broken or depreciated relationship. It helps to restore reengagement, trust, and cooperation after a transgression or violation (Hawk, 2007). Shriver sets forth four main aspects of reconciliation: truth, forbearance, empathy, and a commitment to remain in a relationship due to the interdependence (Shriver, 1995). The role of truth in the process of reconciliation is essential (Gibson, 2006a, 2006b; Lerner, 2007). If truth and justice are denied, movement toward conflict resolution seems impossible (Staub, 2006). Sometimes this may create an obstacle for reconciliation because the parties believe in a different “truth”. Therefore, genuine truth should be acknowledged by the parties before moving forward. The truth or its details may also necessitate in-depth research in some instances (Gibson, 2006b).

#### *Implications for Chechnya*

Reconciliation as a process of conflict transformation can be an important intervention in improving Russo-Chechen relationships. Evidence shows that the people of both Chechnya and Russia are friendly to each other, as they feel a certain degree of empathy toward each other. It is the Russian government that needs to demonstrate conciliatory gestures toward the Chechen community. To avoid hatred and future conflicts, Chechen society today should be given all the necessary opportunities so that people can live a normal life. However, opportunities are not formed coincidentally, rather they should be created by the government through a number of socio-economic and political reforms to affect people’s life deeply and directly.

Currently, the Russian government does not seem supportive of reconciliatory efforts due to its relatively stronger political and



strategic position in Chechnya. The imbalance of power between Russia and Chechnya's rebels makes the former apply oppressive policies vis-à-vis the latter, rather than trying to formulate new methods to handle the problem. Given some attention, reconciliation might be a potential tool for peacemaking in the region. Perhaps the most important point relating to reconciliation is the recognition of the truth behind the Russo-Chechen war. Instead of using propaganda war, recognizing the historical and structural backdrop to the Chechen crisis that would contribute to the process of reconciliation. Identifying the truth is not always easy due to the possibility of different perceptions. Acknowledging the truth of Chechen and Russian policy in respect to Chechnya would emotionally empower people affected by the war, and assist them in healing from their psychological wounds. The recognition of the truth and the promotion of justice would also bring about institutional and relational changes in Chechnya and Russia. Acknowledging past injustices and historical events and attitudes that brought suffering to the Chechens would contribute to the process of conflict transformation in Chechnya. In the same way, acknowledging the damages to Russian people because of Chechen violence could shift the views of Russian people about the Chechens.

Since reconciliation is considered as the capacity of people to bring the experience of the past to bear constructively on the present, considering the simple and obvious historical issues relating to the Russo-Chechen conflict would bring about positive change. In fact, considering Chechnya's history after 1991, few Russo-Chechen interactions affected one group alone. The degrees of separation or difficulty start to diminish when mutual empathy is established. The mutual empathy, however, cannot be established where lies and

injustices are omnipotent, that is why the primary task of both Russians and Chechens must be the recognition of the truth.

### **Peacemaking through Nonviolence**

Decades of war and violence in Chechnya have failed to resolve problems in the region but exacerbated relations inflicting heavy losses on civilians as well as on their local cultural heritage. A new approach is needed. Nonviolent action has deep roots. The central premise of nonviolence philosophy is that the use of violence is morally wrong (Burrows, 1996). Nonviolence prohibits any kinds of physical and psychological harm to human beings. Some expand the scope to include not only human beings, but all kinds of living creatures, and even the whole global ecosystem (Lyons, 2007). Nonviolent action is an agent of social change and a way of life as people strive to achieve positive peace (Vellacott, 2000). Hence, strong and zealous leaders of nonviolence in both Chechnya and other parts of Russia would organize peaceful yet overwhelming civil society movements to pressure the governments in Moscow and Grozny to change their oppressive and inhumane policies.

People use nonviolent techniques in most modern social and political movements related to women's networks, trade unions, environmental groups, solidarity movements, and other segments of civil society (Johansen, 2007). Gandhi (1986) argued in the early 1900s that it would be impossible for the British to rule India by physical coercion alone. Instead, the British ruled India because enough Indians cooperated with them to make their rule possible. He argued that if the Indian people would withdraw their consent, British power would disappear. It would happen nonviolently because British physical power was based on obedience, which if withdrawn

would cause Indian independence (Gandhi, 1986). In the same way, nonviolent techniques can be used in a variety of movements in Chechnya related to such realms as human rights, women rights, freedom of speech, and the like.

Direct nonviolence refers to using nonviolent techniques to influence conflicts peacefully (Burrows, 1996). The nonviolent methods and strategies used to directly confront decisions, laws, and systems that do not treat all human beings equally are integrated parts of direct nonviolence. Structural nonviolence, on the other hand, involves the structures in a society that promote cooperation, recognition, reconciliation, openness, equality, and peaceful actions in conflict situations (Burrows, 1996). Civil society organizations and other democratic institutions are examples of such structures. Cultural nonviolence, however, includes those parts of the culture that transmit traditions of nonviolent behavior, and highlight nonviolent values and qualities (Burrows, 1996). Nonviolent traditions can be found in all cultures, religions, and philosophies including those within Russia and Chechnya.

### *Implications for Chechnya*

The use of nonviolence in Russia, including Chechnya, is not a dream. As a strategy, it successfully worked in different parts of the world to transform a variety of conflicts, and similarly it may work in Chechnya and other parts of Russia to transform conflicts. It can be used as a conflict resolution tool in conjunction with other strategies to bring about positive change in the region. Nonviolence is not a means to be employed only by non-state actors. In fact, its contribution to regional peace may be enhanced by the institutional reforms introduced by both the Kremlin and local

Chechen government. A nonviolent approach by both governments to regional issues would play a positive role in changing local peoples' views about the situation in the republic thus weakening the position of those who see the resolution of the problem largely through a violence prism. Losing any degree of local people's support would force Chechen fighters to search for nonviolent or at least less violent methods of struggle.

If employed by political leaders as a conflict transformation method and used in conjunction with other peacemaking methods, nonviolence could make a serious contribution to constructive peace in the region. People in solidarity in different regions of Russia could support a nonviolent movement in the region. It is true that application of nonviolent methods differs across cultures and regions, and neither Russia nor Chechnya is with rich traditions of nonviolence. Nonetheless, starting strong nonviolence traditions in the region does not seem perplexing due to the Russian pacifists such as late Viktor Popkov who sacrificed his own life for nonviolence in Chechnya.

Soldiers' Mothers, the Russian civil society organization of women, has played a significant role in protesting Russia's wars in Chechnya thus showing the possibility on nonviolent action within the Russian context. However, stronger nationwide civil movements are needed to promote peace and prosperity in Chechnya. Coordinating the cooperation of Russian civil society organizations with those that function abroad would yield better results. Moreover, coordinating the work of Russian civil society organizations would assist in resisting Moscow's oppressive policies

### **Peacemaking and Empowerment**

Weak, intimidated, belittled, wounded, traumatized, sick, tired, hungry, homeless, vulnerable, and desperate people cannot

make peace. Empowering people in Chechnya to secure their own basic human needs requires democratic governance that entails characteristics such as openness and responsibility. Empowerment requires representation for all people at every level, in the institutions of national as well as global governance. Empowerment encompasses human rights, good governance, and access to education as well as health care. All of these elements have been absent for many years in Chechnya.

To reach a positive change in Chechnya people need to be empowered with knowledge, self-esteem, skills, and resources, as well as by directly engaging in peacebuilding efforts. Empowerment has a direct relationship with human security, which consists of physical safety, economic well-being, social inclusion, and the full exercise of human rights (Ogata, 2003). One of the best ways to protect human security is by having a democratic state—open, responsible, and effective (Wilson, 2006). Human security can be achieved in collaboration with government, civil society organizations, communities, and businesses in partnerships of common purpose.

Empowering Chechen people may assist in correcting their human security deficits through enabling them to protect their own rights. Human security, in turn, would empower people to pursue their own democratic and sustainable development. Therefore, empowerment, human security, and democratic development are interlocked. This is why Chechen children should have access to education opportunities, which necessitates federal government care and consideration in addition to that of the Chechen government.

#### *Implications for Chechnya*

Grave crimes against humanity were committed against women in Chechnya

during the wars. The Chechen case reflects the bitter face of armed conflicts' as they impact civilians, especially children and women, because they are among the least powerful groups.

Women and children living in Chechnya are among the victimized (Seierstad, 2008); they are not just incidental casualties but are also targets of war. Today, Chechen women are not safe even in the current relative stability in the region. Hence, empowerment for women must be perceived as a central issue in Chechnya. Much of the current literature on women and peace focuses on empowerment through women's equal participation in the political decision making (Snyder, 2009). In this sense, one way of empowering Chechen women would be including their representatives in the decision-making apparatus of the republic, instead of abducting and killing Chechen women peace activists such as Estemirova.

Empowerment has a number of implications for the people of Chechnya. Above all, the NGO movements in Russia and Chechnya should be given international support to develop stronger roots. NGOs could support different layers of the Chechen population especially children, women, and people with disabilities to protect their own rights and meet their own needs.

Foreign assistance is needed for people to achieve some success in civil society establishment, or NGO development in Chechnya as well as in Russia in general (Sundstrom, 2005). Advancing the power of women to end the injustices and disadvantages they face in Chechnya requires the institutionalization of their power. It might be useful to channel national and foreign aid to Chechen women to empower and unite them in political parties and NGOs with a coordination center in Grozny or Moscow. Elite Chechen women

united in a political party and/or NGOs would significantly contribute to positive change in the republic. Creating a unified political party would increase Chechen women's power to take active part in the legislation and executive processes. These women would be able to create their own political tools to create their own security and prosperity, which would also significantly contribute to peacebuilding and to the overall well being of the Chechen people. Chechen women should also actively participate in dealing with refugee issues at the displacement camps, as well as rebuilding education systems, addressing critical and sensitive issues, and supporting war widows, etc. Chechen women's participation in all post-conflict reintegration processes would contribute to the positive social change in the country.

Empowering the Chechen people requires the cooperation of international and national, as well as governmental and non-governmental actors on a program of action and policy to promote human security in Chechnya. Bringing together actors as diverse as the Federal Russian and local Chechen governments, local and international NGOs, local communities, global networks, business enterprises, labor unions, and scholars to consider human security issue in Chechnya may appear difficult, but it is not impossible. As with any foreign involvement in Chechnya, Russia's consent and willingness to cooperate is a key to success.

Moreover, preventing a new wave of war in Chechnya would be more effective than trying to stop a war after it has started. Therefore, conflict prevention efforts in the republic should be multi-modal and multi-level, and an integral part of the Kremlin's policy that would also entail a number of immediate political, social, and economic reforms.

### Negotiating for Mutual Gains

There have been a number of failed negotiations between the Russians and Chechens that have not brought about a long-lasting peace mainly due to the parties' perceptions of the conflict as zero-sum. All the negotiations that took place between the sides were competitive with each party not caring much about each other's goals. The parties need to employ collaborative negotiation recognizing their interdependence if they are to reach peace through a constructive process (Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). At the very beginning of the negotiations, both the Chechens and Russians should adopt a policy of finding reciprocal creative grounds for negotiations for the sake of the both parties.

Barsky (2008, 2000) discusses a capacity building approach to conflict resolution that entails pre-mediation, trust building, and conflict assessment. It is designed to prepare parties for a dialogue or negotiations by enhancing their motivation, skills, and resources. A capacity building approach is especially needed in cases when parties to a conflict do not want to meet for any reason (Barsky, 2000, 2008).

Ross and Rothman (1999) discuss a variety of ways to transform ethnic conflicts in constructive ways. They argue that it is possible to create special institutional structures valued by all sides to deal with the conflict, and are able to create contexts in which parties can explore options without the risks of committing themselves to any outcomes (Ross & Rothman, 1999). The non-binding contexts include informal discussions in interactive problem solving workshops (as discussed above) at which parties learn about each other's positions and priorities.

Fisher and Ury (1991) use the term *principled negotiation* as an alternative to the hard and soft positional bargaining

strategies. In tough negotiations, the parties take hard positions in order not to lose. This may bring about some impasse to the negotiation process, thus delaying the outcome, returning to earlier phases of negotiations, or totally terminating the process itself (Holmes, 1992). If the process ends up with a product because of the concessions of one of the parties, it may not be a wise outcome. A choice of a new strategy somewhere between hard and soft positional bargaining would change the game that necessitates focusing on inventing options for mutual gains (Fisher & Ury, 1991). Parties, therefore, may become more collaborative and inclined to problem solving tendencies. In fact, successful negotiation results in parties moving toward a collaborative process (Holmes, 1992; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). If collaborative tactics cease to be used by the parties, the negotiation process may break down. Therefore, collaborative negotiation tactics might be helpful in leading the parties toward integrative negotiations.

#### *Implications for Chechnya*

The outcome of the negotiations that took place between the Russians and the Chechens in 1996 and 1997 resulting in the Khasavyurt Accord and Moscow Treaty were not healthy. The subsequent events that took place in 1999 that renewed the armed hostilities prove that point. The parties to the Russo-Chechen war need to create and implement a new set of constructive talks. Keeping the two aforementioned preconditions in mind—abandoning demands for the full independence of Chechnya by the Chechens, and Russian's identifying Chechen rebels as terrorists- the parties may develop a collaborative approach to negotiations. Unlike the 1996 and 1997 negotiations, the negotiation Chechen party can and should be

represented by a group of people from different Chechen interest groups and formed after serious discussions on the principles and strategies that should be followed up. At the current historical moment it may appear impossible to hold a new set of negotiations because the Russian-backed Kadyrov government of Chechnya, and Moscow's short-term gains in the region. However, the foundation for constructive negotiations should be laid out now when the Chechens are more prone to resolving the problem within the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. Obviously, the Chechen resistance in the region is still strong and organized as it tries to develop its borders. Recent terrorist events in Moscow, Ossetia, and Dagestan indicate the strength of Chechen separatists (Hurriyet, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c).

During the negotiation process, the role of an effective mediator is essential. The history of the Russo-Chechen war and the efforts of the OSCE to transform it demonstrate that its role as a mediator was not successful. Consequently, the format of the mediation process as well as the mediator need to be changed. A new group of committed mediators including some Western and Islamic countries could participate in preparing proposals for discussion.

Giving up imperial ambitions would ensure that Russia was respected in the region. Russia's policy of democratization and liberalization would also facilitate the solution of many socioeconomic and sociopolitical conflicts existing in the country, including Chechnya. However, nothing should be taken for granted; rather, whatever autonomy Russia gives to Chechnya should be negotiated for the mutual benefits of both sides. Any outcome reached through negotiations should be sustainable and long lasting, satisfying not

only both parties to the conflict, but also the in-group Chechen opposition.

### Conclusion

People from different layers of both societies should actively participate in informal conflict resolution processes to break the vicious cycle of violence. This paper has examined a number of interdisciplinary empirical and normative PACS theories to explain the root causes of the Russo-Chechen conflict and design a dispute system. The analysis of the Russo-Chechen conflict demonstrates that none of the theories discussed in this paper is enough to explain the complex causes of this conflict alone. Confining the Russo-Chechen conflict to a single cause would block capturing its complexities. Taken together the theories presented in this essay may be more productive and effective in explaining the causes of the conflict and the violence still a part of the Chechnya-Russian predicament.

It is proposed in this paper that a community-based problem solving approach that offers a multilevel and multimodal system to design a way to reach a lasting peace by including the participation of top leadership, middle- range leadership, as well as grassroots leaders has the potential to be effective. The peacebuilding process is most productive when it takes place on a variety of levels at the same time (Lederach, 1998).

Employing a combination of conflict resolution methods to the Russo-Chechen case depends on its particularities that may yield a better product. An overview of a number of transformational resolution methods that can be coordinated together in a multi-track peacebuilding system is presented. They all are tied to each other organically, since the successful application of any of those methods mentioned above

may contribute to the success of the other in the same context.

Almost all of the aforementioned methods, except for negotiations, are informal. The purpose of using those methods is to transform the conflict elements; thereby creating a shift in the conflict that might support an opportunity for transformation. The argument is not to resolve the Russo-Chechen conflict entirely and instantly; rather, it is necessary to transform this conflict from an intractable stage to a tractable one in which new opportunities emerge to enable both parties to move forward.

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